



Police name person of interest in counselors' murder

(Update, Sonoma County, August 24, 2004, 4:30 p.m.) Police in California are looking for a man who may have information relating to the deaths of a Zeeland man and his fiance.

The bodies of Jason Allen of Zeeland and Lindsay Cutshall of Ohio were found Wednesday on a beach in Jenner, California. They were working as counselors at a youth Christian camp.

Police want to question 21-year-old Nicholas Scarseth of Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin who they stopped Friday in Fort Bragg about 100 miles north of where the couple's bodies were found.

Detectives in California sent out a statewide alert for Scarseth. Authorities aren't naming him as a suspect or saying whether he has information about the case.

Police aren't saying why they stopped him in the first place.

Some California residents say there was a drifter in town at the same time Jason and Lindsay were there. One of those residents, Rich Peason, says he ran across that drifter and offered him a cigar. "And then that morning there was a kid sleeping on the park bench and he was kinda grumpy," Peason told 24 Hour News 8.

Whoever it was, police want to know and say his description matches that of Nicholas Scarseth, a hitchhiker from Wisconsin. Scarseth's mother says her son couldn't possibly be their man. "No, he's pretty easygoing," she says. "He might look a little different, but he's pretty easygoing."

Scarseth's mom adds that he has problems with alcohol, drugs and his temper, and has been in jail many times for his behavior. She says her son grew up Catholic and attended Bible school, but is not a religious person nor has a problem with people who are religious.

She says he is just traveling the country, picking up rides, is penniless and couldn't possibly afford a gun. "I don't think he knows the situation and that anybody's looking for him because he doesn't read the paper or watch the news," his mom says.

Police want to know if he does, which could break this case.

24 Hour News 8 looked into Scarseth's lengthy criminal record in Wisconsin. From 2000 to 2004, he faced charges for numerous minor crimes including retail theft as recent as last month, four disorderly conduct charges, four underage drinking/possession of alcohol charges, hitchhiking, two resisting or obstructing an officer charges, possession of tobacco and marijuana charges and criminal damage to property. These incidents took place within four different counties in Wisconsin.

The victims' families will receive friends for a visitation on Friday from 2-4 p.m. and 7-9 p.m. at Immanuel Baptist Church in the Fellowship Hall. A celebration memorial for Jason and Lindsay will be held Saturday, September 4 in Fresno, Ohio, where Lindsay was from.

24 Hour News 8 has a crew in California tracking this story and will continue to bring you the very latest.



Jason Allen and Lindsay Cutshall

